ERCOT Statment 2/2/11

FROM ERCOT: Power Emergency – Conservation CRITICAL--Rotating Outages Have Begun

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) has instructed utilities to begin rotating outages to compensate for a generation shortage due to numerous plant trips that occurred because of the extreme weather.

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electric service, typically lasting 10-45 minutes per neighborhood. The locations and durations are determined by the local utilities. Critical need customers such as hospitals and nursing homes are generally not included.

It is not known at this time how long the need for rotating outages will last.

Consumers and businesses are urged to reduce their electricity use to the lowest level possible, including these steps:

*   **Limit electricity usage to only that consumption which is absolutely necessary. Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances, and electronic equipment.**

*   **Businesses should minimize the use of electric lighting and electricity-consuming equipment as much as possible.**

*   **Large consumers of electricity should consider shutting down or reducing non-essential production processes.**

See more conservation tips at "Powerful Advice," Public Utility Commission of Texas: www.puc.state.tx.us./ocp/conserve

BACKGROUND
A Power Emergency indicates that the regional electric grid operator, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), has instructed utilities to implement rotating outages to reduce load.

Rotating outages are controlled, temporary interruptions of electrical service initiated by each utility when supplies of reserve power are exhausted. Without this safety valve, generators would overload and begin shutting down to avoid damage, risking a domino effect of a region-wide outage.

Rotating outages primarily affect residential neighborhoods and small businesses and do not typically include critical-need customers such as hospitals and nursing homes.

The outages are limited to 10-45 minutes before being rotated to a different neighborhood. Some customers may experience longer outages if power surges cause equipment failure during the restoration process. Customers can minimize power surges by turning off appliances, lights and other equipment, except for one task light to determine when power has been restored.

ERCOT REGION
The ERCOT Region includes Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi, Abilene and the Rio Grande Valley. It does not include the El Paso area, the Texas Panhandle, Northeast Texas (Longview, Marshall and Texarkana), and Southeast Texas (Beaumont, Port Arthur, and the Woodlands). Region map:
http://www.ercot.com/news/mediakit/maps/index.html

HELPFUL CONTACTS
For Utility Information
Check your electric bill to identify your utility company or transmission provider.

Investor-Owned Utilities (Transmission & Distribution)
American Electric Power   877-373-4858
CenterPoint Energy   800-752-8036
Oncor   888-313-4747
Sharyland Utilities   956-668-9551
Texas-New Mexico Power   888-866-7456

Outside ERCOT
Entergy-Texas   800-968-8243

Community-Owned Electric Utilities
Texas Public Power Association, http://www.tppa.com/

Utility Directories
http://www.puc.state.tx.us/electric/directories/index.cfm

Electric Industry Links
http://www.puc.state.tx.us/electric/links.cfm

ERCOT Market Participants
http://www.ercot.com/mktparticipants/index.html

Conservation Tips
http://www.puc.state.tx.us/ocp/conserve/index.cfm

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to

approximately 22 million Texas customers – representing 85 percent of the state's electric load and 75 percent of the Texas land area. As the Independent System Operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects 40,000 miles of transmission lines and more than 550 generation units. ERCOT also manages financial settlement for the competitive wholesale bulk-power market and administers customer switching for 6.5 million Texans in competitive choice areas.